



## Plastic Bag Recycling Focus Group: July 1, 2010

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### Meeting Agenda

**Date:** July 1, 2010

**Time:** 1:30 – 3:00 pm

**Location:** Northeast District Center, 10303 Toolyard  
San Antonio, TX 78233

### GOAL

The goal of the Plastic Bag Recycling Focus Group meeting held on July 1, 2010 was to acquire support from retailers to promote and to implement a single-use plastic bag voluntary recycling program in the City of San Antonio.

### AGENDA

Action	Presenter
Review a General Description of a Voluntary Take Back Program Structure	David McCary/David Lopez
Establish Commitments from Major Retailers	David McCary/David Lopez
Agree upon a Timeline <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Length of time for program to run</li></ul>	David McCary/David Lopez
Identify Performance Targets <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2009 will be the baseline period</li><li>• Example: Percentage change for:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Number of plastic bags purchased</li><li>– Number of plastic bags recycled</li><li>– Number of reusable bags distributed</li></ul></li></ul>	David McCary/David Lopez
Identify a Measurement System <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suggestion: Allow Texas Retailers Assn. to aggregate the target numbers</li><li>• Reporting frequency: quarterly, semi-annually or annually</li></ul>	David McCary/David Lopez
Discuss Roll Out Campaign	David McCary/David Lopez
Closing Remarks	

## Meeting Purpose:

The goal of the meeting held on July 1, 2010 was to acquire support from retailers to promote and implement a single-use plastic bag voluntary recycling program in the City of San Antonio. The meeting outlined the following points for discussion:

- Review a General Description of a Voluntary Take Back Program Structure
- Establish Commitments from Major Retailers
- Agree upon a Timeline
- Identify Performance Targets
- Identify a Measurement System

## Letter of Commitment

Prior to the meeting, several major retailers were identified and were sent a letter of commitment (LOC) on behalf of the Solid Waste Department Director, David W. McCary. The LOC conveys the City's duty and commitment to protect the natural environment and the welfare of San Antonio residents. Consequently, the Solid Waste Department's calls forth a partnership with area retailers in developing and implementing a plastic bag voluntary recycling program to reduce the City's use and dependence on single-use, non-recyclable plastic bags. *Note: The LOC can be found on pg.6.*

The Texas Retailers Association received a commitment to participate in a plastic bag recovery program from the following retailers:

- JC Penny
- HEB
- Wal-Mart
- Target
- Walgreens

## Group Feedback Based on Retailer Expectations As Outlined in LOC

- Expectation: Provide and allocate space for plastic bag recycling receptacles

Retailers communicated that recycling receptacles cannot be located at every store's retail outlet since allocation of bins will depend on the store location. Agreement was reached on the need to provide the recycling receptacles but locality may determine if there is space for the receptacle and if it is an area that allows for collected bags to be retrieved on a regular basis.

Although not every store within a chain in San Antonio will allow for the placement of a plastic bag recovery receptacle due to some kind of external limitation, retailers articulated that they would make all efforts to place plastic bag recycling containers in the most prominent locations.

- Expectation: Provide clear and visible signage pertaining to recycling (English/Spanish)

Retailers agreed on the need to provide clear and visible signage on recycling containers. Ideas shared included placing images on receptacles, such as the recycling symbol (mobius symbol), in the place of text. If retailers decide to agree upon a common symbol or form of signage, that same symbol can be showcased in all retail stores as an announcement to the public that the retailer is an active participant in the plastic bag recycling program. In response to questions about the role of the City in terms of providing assistance to retailers for promotional efforts, the City communicated that they will be able to provide support in the following ways:

- Assist with the production cost of signage
- Promote the program via the SWMD website and the City's main website
- Explore other appropriate channels of communication, such as newspaper advertisement, radio and television Public Service Announcements (PSA)

Attendees felt that it is critical to the lifespan and effectiveness of the program to promote the program aggressively through the launching period as well as the months following inception of the program. Continuing education is a key component, and it is a responsibility that falls on both the City and the retailers. Participants offered ideas such as block walks, ads, banners, and partnering with schools to ensure the message is repeated consistently throughout the program's beginning stages, the implementation process, and long term enforcement efforts.

- Expectation: Provide material or strategies to educate and encourage public participation

Retailers expressed concern about the amount of plastic bag recycling educational material that should be developed and how it would be provided to residents as well as related costs. From a funding perspective, it was voiced that this type of requirement should be approached from a voluntary stand point.

- Expectation: Provide progress reports on volume of plastic bags purchased, plastic bags recycled and volume of reusable bags distributed or sold

The idea of a voluntary plastic bag recycling program is to have the stakeholders take a major role in deciding and agreeing upon the program design. That includes developing a set of performance measures that can be tracked to measure progress or change over a specific timeframe. For example, Austin's plastic bag recycling program, "Austin's Got a Brand New Bag," identified the following as their performance measures:

- Plastic bags purchased
- Plastic bags recycled
- Reusable bags purchased or provided

There was concern and reluctance about reporting and disclosing specific number of plastic bags purchased, but that type of information may perhaps be able to be provided in percentages and not exact numbers. Reporting numbers in an aggregate fashion was looked upon more favorably.

As they did in Austin, the Texas Retailers Association volunteered to be the central point of gathering and aggregating the information.

### **Proposed Timeline**

Retailers agreed on an 18 month period as the timeline for retail stores to provide and implement a plastic bag recycling program at various locations. In order to monitor the progress of the program as it is implemented; participants feel that the program progress should be evaluated every six (6) months in order to track effective and ineffective methods and program strategies. The purpose of a continual evaluation approach will be to make certain predetermined goals are being met, identify early indications of potential challenges that may hinder program effectiveness, and make any necessary modifications to keep program moving forward in a seamless fashion.

### **Performance Targets**

Baseline and data reporting requirements will be established by the Texas Retailers Association in conjunction with the five major retailers who have agreed to participate (JC Penny, HEB, Wal-Mart, Target and Walgreens). Performance targets and measures will be outlined by TRA and will be provided to the group for further feedback at the next meeting. TRA representatives and retailers recommended performance goals should be defined in a manner that will promote ambitious and aggressive behavior from retailers, but, more importantly, should be goals that are achievable.

### **Proposed Program Coordinator**

Keep San Antonio Beautiful (KSAB) has been a leading proponent of several efforts and programs aimed at educating the public about solid waste issues and public stewardship. KSAB has offered to manage, participate and be a neutral leader of San Antonio's single-use plastic bag program.

## Next Steps

The identified five major retailers will reconvene with the stakeholders on July 29, 2010 at 1:30 pm (Central Standard Time) to discuss the program timeline, baseline and performance targets, measurement system, and roll-out campaign options.

## Additional Information

Stay informed! Agendas, presentations, and meeting notes from previous meetings as well as next meeting details can be found on the Solid Waste Management Website under the “Events and Hot Topics” section. Link information provided below:

<http://www.sanantonio.gov/swmd/solidwaste/SingleUsePlasticBags.asp>

A Look at How Other States Encourage Recycling! Florida’s “A Bag’s Life” plastic bag recycling program includes a recycling location finder on their website (address included below) which allows residents to find a plastic bag recycling stations by zip code.

<http://www.abagslife.com>

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<http://www.sanantonio.gov/swmd/solidwaste/SingleUsePlasticBags.asp>

## List of Participants

Attendees at July 1<sup>st</sup> Plastic Bag Meeting (in person or via tele-conference):

Name	Company
Christine Villareal	CEAC
Trey Woods	Avangard Innovative
L. Van Coppenole	CEAC
Kay Floyd	Five Star Cleaner
Susan Ghertner	HEB
Maggie Hernandez	HEB
Christina Aronhalt	Keep San Antonio Beautiful
Shanna Kilgore	Valero
Lita Salazar	SA Restaurant Association
Pam Hoodless	Rose Cleaners
Yolanda Arellano	SARA
Mike McMullen	Texas Chemical Association
Andy Stanley	Southwest Dry Cleaners Association
Diane Lang	City Environmental Advisory Committee
Richard Thum	Five Star Cleaners
Randy Bourland	Greenstar
Ed Howie	Brand True
Joe Williams	Texas Retailers Association
Mike McMullen	Texas Chemical Association
Allen Horne	CVS Caremark
Donna Dempsey	Plastic Bag Affiliates

City Staff	
Peter Zaroni	City of San Antonio
David McCary	City of San Antonio
David Lopez	City of San Antonio
David Newman	City of San Antonio
Sandy Redmond	City of San Antonio
Kimberly Cervantez	City of San Antonio
Natalie Urbina	City of San Antonio
Stephen Haney	City of San Antonio

## Letter of Commitment



# CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT  
1940 GRANDSTAND  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS 78238

June 21, 2010

Name  
Company  
Address  
City, State, Zip

Dear [Enter Name],

The City acknowledges its duty and commitment to protect the natural environment and the welfare of its residents. As a result, Solid Waste Management Department (SWMD) would like to partner with area retailers to work collaboratively towards reducing the City's use and dependence of single-use, non-recyclable plastic bags through a voluntary plastic bag recycling plan.

Through meetings held with stakeholders, consensus was established to move forward with a voluntary plastic bag recycling plan which would depend on commitment and active participation from major retailers. The stakeholders have identified tasks to be undertaken by the participating major retailers. Major retailer responsibilities within this voluntary program will include designating stores which will:

- Provide and allocate space for plastic bag recycling receptacles
- Provide clear and visible signage pertaining to recycling (English/Spanish)
- Provide material or strategies to educate and encourage public participation
- Educate their staff to promote recycling and the use of reusable bags
- Provide progress reports to the City which measure and report on the following:
  - Number of plastic bags purchased and pounds of plastic bags recycled
  - Number of reusable bags distributed or sold
  - To maintain confidentiality of data, reporting from retailers will be gathered by a third party and reported as aggregate figures

Changing our recycling habits and culture requires SWMD to gain support and commitment from businesses and the residents of San Antonio. We ask that you and your company commit to participate in the City's proposed voluntary take back program of recycling plastic bags. Upon signing and returning this letter of commitment to me, you commit to work alongside the City to provide opportunities for residents to recycle plastic bags by undertaking the responsibilities listed above. Please return the signed copy in the enclosed self addressed envelope or mail to my attention to the address shown above.

The next stakeholder's meeting will be held on Thursday, July 1, 2010 at 1:30 pm at the Northeast Service Center located at 10303 Toolyard. If you plan to attend, please RSVP by calling Natalie Urbina at (210) 207-6464. The meeting will also be available via a telephone conference number. If you call Natalie, she can provide you with the call in number. In the interim, should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (210) 207-6470.

Your participation is very valuable to the continuing efforts which the City of San Antonio is making to implement a voluntary single-use plastic bag recycling program and reduce the rate of plastic bag usage. I look forward to partnering with you in this important endeavor.

Sincerely,



David W. McCary, CPM, Director  
Solid Waste Management Department

I have read and fully agree to this Letter of Commitment and look forward to assisting the City of San Antonio's Solid Waste Management Department in this role.

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Print Name:

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Date:

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Signature:

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Name of Company:

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